

Getting Your Flu Shot is Easier Than Ever Before: Attorney General Matt Denn Joins DPH at NcCo Flu Clinic to Encourage Vaccinations

DOVER – Delaware Attorney General Matt Denn joined Division of Public Health (DPH) officials to encourage all residents to get their flu shot at a free flu clinic held today in Wilmington. The clinic, held at the Porter State Service Center, was the first one in New Castle County for the 2016-2017 flu season.

A full listing of upcoming DPH flu clinics in each county can be found at flu.delaware.gov. This includes DPH's first drive-thru flu clinic in several years, scheduled for October 27, 2016, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the parking lot of the Blue Hen Corporate Center. DPH will also provide flu shots to children ages 6 months to 18 years at the following State Service Centers by appointment: Hudson (Newark), Williams (Dover), Adams (Georgetown) and Shipley (Seaford). For a list of pharmacies and other locations where flu shots are offered near you, use the Flu Vaccine Finder on Flu.gov and enter your zip code.

The Porter Service Center flu clinic provided a festive atmosphere with a live DJ spinning music and staff handing out free gift cards to the first 150 people to receive their flu shots. Attorney General Denn was one of 218 individuals to receive a flu shot at the event. The Delaware Division of Public Health is promoting the importance of annual flu vaccination this year through its statewide "Vaccination: protecting each other" outreach campaign. The campaign is

aimed at urging people who are not considered at high risk for getting the flu to get vaccinated. Even those not in a high-risk group, likely live or interact with those who are such as young children, older adults or those with underlying health conditions or weakened immune systems.

“As the father of two young boys, I want to make sure I protect myself from getting the flu, and prevent them from catching it from me,” said Attorney General Denn. “The protection offered by vaccinations is important for everyone, not just those at high risk.”

“Getting your flu vaccination is easier than ever before with all of the locations available to Delawareans,” said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. “We are hoping to again reduce the number of influenza cases in Delaware this flu season. The best protection against getting the flu is to take a few minutes of your time to receive a vaccination. We hope the majority of Delawareans follow Attorney General Denn’s lead and get vaccinated for the upcoming season.”

Last flu season, there were 2,064 flu cases reported in Delaware including six flu-related deaths. This year’s vaccine helps to protect against up to four strains of influenza. The flu clinic also served as a preparedness exercise, so DPH staff could practice their readiness in the event of a large-scale health emergency and test the ability to accommodate people with disabilities. American Sign Language interpreters were on hand to assist the deaf and hard of hearing , and bilingual staff were available to assist with translations.

DPH urges all Delawareans 6 months of age and older who have not yet been vaccinated against the flu to get a vaccination as soon as possible. The flu is easy to transmit and the vaccine is the best protection. The vaccine is readily available through medical providers, pharmacies, and some grocery stores. DPH is conducting public flu clinics including some with evening hours at various locations in the state. For

DPH flu clinic schedules this season, visit <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/fluclinics.html>.

Flu vaccination reduces the risk of getting sick from the flu or spreading the disease to others. It is especially important that the following groups get flu shots:

- Seniors;
- Pregnant women and their household contacts;
- Caregivers and household contacts of children younger than 6 months, since those children are too young to receive the vaccine;
- Those with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems;
- Food service providers;
- Health care providers.

Delawareans are also encouraged to prevent infection by taking simple everyday measures such as washing hands, using hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes and staying at home when sick. These efforts help stop the spread of respiratory illnesses including flu.

Flu symptoms come on suddenly, and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches and body aches, and fatigue. Some people get complications including pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus and ear infections. Providers can prescribe antiviral medicines to make illness milder, hasten recovery, and prevent serious complications, hospitalizations, and even death.

Beginning in October each year, DPH monitors the occurrence of influenza-like illnesses in hospitals, selected long-term care facilities, and medical clinics to track flu trends in the state.

For more information on influenza prevention, diagnosis and treatment, as well as for a listing of DPH flu clinics visit flu.delaware.gov or call DPH at 888-282-8672. DPH's seasonal flu shot clinics are intended for Delawareans age nine and

older who have no healthcare provider or whose insurance does not cover flu vaccinations. Those with Medicaid or Medicare are welcome to attend but should bring their insurance card since their insurance will be billed accordingly.

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.